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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to show how the effective use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies can provide a more complete picture when conducting research and can serve as a means of validation. The context is research on special education reform in South Carolina. The first phase of the research project focused on constructing reform profiles of schools and school districts. Two of the four studies conducted are the focus of this paper. The first study investigated whether schools and districts could be profiled according to their general and special education reform initiatives. The focus group sample included two superintendents, six special education directors, one principal, three special education teachers, and one district director of instruction. The second study assessed the reform characteristics and practices of school districts in South Carolina and constructed general profiles that reflected similarities and differences in these characteristics and practices. Participants included all 86 South Carolina school superintendents, 97 special education directors, and 1 general and 1 special education teacher from each of 160 schools. Participants completed a survey, with a final response rate of about 43%. These two studies illustrate how incorporating qualitative and quantitative methodology and analysis creates a more complete picture of reform profiles in South Carolina's public schools. An appendix contains the interview protocol, a discussion of some themes in the studies, an interview, and theme analyses. (SLD)

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Combining Quantitative And Qualitative Methods in Research: An Example from a Study of School Reform

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Abstract:

Educational researchers have focused primarily on the use of quantitative and qualitative research as two separate and opposing strategies. The idea of jointly using both methods to investigate issues in education is, however, becoming an increasingly legitimate choice (Caporaso, 1995; Liebscher, 1998; Looker, Denton, & Davis, 1989; Rabinowitz & Weseen, 1997; Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). This paper will attempt to show how the effective use of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies can provide a more complete picture when conducting research and serve as a means of validation. The merits of this combined approach can be seen in our current research on special education reform in public schools for the state of South Carolina.

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Importance to Field

Qualitative and quantitative methodology can be jointly used to provide researchers with a more complete picture when conducting high quality research. Opposing sides of the quantitative/qualitative continuum have debated this issue in the public arena for too long. However, there are those in the field who are rethinking their methods and adding new research tools to their repertoire by including both techniques (e.g. Rabinowitz & Weseen, 1997). This roundtable presentation embodies this philosophy and places it in the context of current practice.

Project ANSER

Project ANSER (Addressing the Needs and Supports for Educational Reform for Students with Disabilities) is a three-year study funded by the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (Grant # H324C980137) to systematically investigate reform in public schools, specifically focusing on how reform efforts affect students with disabilities in the areas of student achievement, school accountability, and the alignment and compatibility of general and special education curriculum. By examining reform practices in a systematic manner using both quantitative and qualitative methods of research, we are currently identifying elements essential for successful reform in the state of South Carolina.

Phase 1

The first phase of our research focused primarily on constructing reform profiles of schools and school districts. There were four studies that made up Phase 1 research, two of which will be focused on in this paper. Throughout Phase 1, we 1) sought to construct a small number of profiles that typify the process and content of reform initiatives, 2) identified the characteristics, climate, inclusiveness, and staff-development practices associated with these profiles, 3) categorized South Carolina schools according to a profile match, and 4) identified the barriers, human and material, to reform efforts in schools. The schools within these profiles are currently being investigated in Phase 2 of our research. The primary goal of Phase 1 research was to understand the logistics of successful and unsuccessful school reform efforts. We sought to determine if school districts and schools could be profiled according to their general and special education reform initiatives and implementation characteristics.

Study 1A

Research Question

The objective for Study 1A was to determine, through the use of a focus group and individual interviews, if school and districts could be profiled according to their general and special education reform initiatives and implementation characteristics. The primary research question was "What characteristics of reform implementation can be used to develop profiles that discriminate between schools and school districts?" The term "reform" was not defined for the participants at this point. Rather, its definition evolved out of the focus group meeting and interview processes. This open-ended format

generated a large body of discriminating characteristics that may distinguish between reform-minded and non-reform-minded schools and districts.

Participants

Participants for the focus group attended an all day meeting on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus. The Project ANSER team used purposive sampling to invite individuals in the state who were progressive, reform-minded educators based on the assumption that they would be most knowledgeable about current reform initiatives. Colleagues from the University of South Carolina and personnel from the State Department of Education provided recommendations of such individuals from schools and districts across South Carolina. The sample included 2 superintendents, 6 special education directors, 1 principal, 3 special education teachers, and 1 district director of instruction. There was regional and socioeconomic representation of various regions throughout the state present among this group.

Methods

The focus group asked participants to identify characteristics of reform-minded schools/districts. The focus group questions were designed to elicit perceptions about school reform, discriminating characteristics of successful and unsuccessful reform, effects of reform on general and special education, stages of reform, components of reform, and personnel principally responsible for school reform initiatives. Based on their discussion, the participants defined specific reform variables and measurable outcomes that distinguish between reform and non-reform-minded schools.

The Reform Characteristics Guided Interview (RCGI), located in the appendix, was used to conduct follow-up interviews and establish reliability among the themes identified. The RCGI consisted of a series of questions similar to those asked at the focus group meeting. Five RCGI's were conducted with 2 principals, 2 teachers, and 1 guidance counselor from South Carolina's public schools. A theme analysis of these interviews confirmed the characteristics and variables defined by the focus group.

Transcriptions of both the focus group and interviews were qualitatively analyzed. Both theme and domain analyses were used to establish common themes and perceptions regarding reform in South Carolina, and to identify specific variables to consider when developing formal survey instruments that were used in Study 1B.

Results

Analysis of the focus group discussion revealed reform variables that define 11 major themes. A list of the themes can be found in the appendix. Principals were identified unanimously as the essential component of reform when discussing school leadership and culture. They were identified as being among the top factors in recognizing the need for change and determining the success of the implementation process. Such principals were described as those who supported teacher-initiated change in the classroom, and those who expertly manage the task of getting an entire school to commit to reform processes. Just as principals were identified as playing a great role in the successful implementation of reform processes, however, they were also noted as key players in blocking teacher attempts at reform.

Many of the reform variables listed related to teaching practices. In addition to the availability of resources needed for teaching, the group noted techniques and strategies that address the diversity amongst learning styles and needs for both regular and special education students, as well as, teacher flexibility regarding change. The group expressed that teachers needed to be willing to change teaching practices in order to fit the needs of today's students. Interestingly, the group felt that this was associated in part to the length of the teachers' careers. Those who were newer to the field were more open to change and risk-taking. Finally, there was a great deal of discussion on the topic of inclusion and support for students, as well as, teachers who service students who receive special education services. For example, the amount of inclusion provided to students, the successful communication and collaboration among all educators for servicing special education students, and the location of the special education classrooms within school buildings were identified as variables that distinguish different reform profiles among schools.

The remaining 9 themes included teacher education, legislation, families and schools, student involvement and ownership, attendance and dropout rates, safety, student outcomes, special education students, and public relations. The defining variables of these themes can be seen in the appendix. As stated above, these distinguishing reform themes were then used to construct selective and constructive-response questions for the formal instruments used in study 1B.

Study 1B

Research Question

The objective of study 1B was to assess the reform characteristics and practices of school districts in South Carolina and to construct general profiles that reflect similarities and differences in these characteristics and practices. The primary research question was "What are the profiles that characterize various levels and types of school reform?"

Participants

The participants for this study included all 86 school superintendents and 97 special education directors in the state of South Carolina and 160 randomly chosen South Carolina schools (1997 State Department of Education Database). From each school, the principals, in addition to themselves, selected one general and one special education teacher to participate in the study. To ensure that the sample was representative, the distributions of free and reduced lunches and percent of students identified as talented and gifted for the sample were checked and compared against South Carolina's school population. The distributions were almost identical.

Methods

The Project ANSER team developed the School Implementation of Reform Surveys (SIRS). The SIRS, located in the appendix, consisted of five separate forms that addressed specific reform variables as related to the roles of the superintendent, special education coordinator, principal, special education teacher, and regular education teacher. The purpose of the instruments was to assist in the evaluation of current reform

implementation in South Carolina's public schools. The variables identified in Study 1A were used to construct low-inference survey questions. Multiple pilots of the SIRS were conducted to strengthen the content validity, inference, clarity, and structure of the surveys. Experts, including grant consultants, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) associate director, superintendents, special education coordinators, principals, special education teachers, and regular education teachers who have implemented reform initiatives, were included in the piloting process.

The initial return-rate for Study 1B was approximately 30%. Follow-up phone calls and faxes were made, and a final return-rate of approximately 43% (286/663) was achieved. The breakdown of return-rates includes 16% for superintendents, 32% for special education coordinators, 54% for principals, 45% for special education teachers and 52% for regular education teachers.

Results

An exploratory cluster analysis was conducted to look for first-order associations among the survey responses. Similar and low inference items from the principal, regular education teacher and special education teacher surveys were used. A list of the questions and the mean responses to these questions across the profiles can be seen in the Table 1. A clustered analysis of the responses to these questions was used to identify primary discriminating variables from the surveys. The discriminating variables resulted in two profile clusters of schools from the principal responses and three profile clusters of schools for the regular and special education teachers. All of the districts surveyed were categorized into one of three profiles using this discriminating function. Schools from the three profiles have since been used to collect data in Study 1C, 1D and Stage 2 research.

Participants were asked to respond to three open-ended statements at the end of the SIRS. The statements included 1) Describe recent reform efforts, if any, in your district, 2) Describe changes you would most like to make in your district, if you could, and 3) Describe the biggest obstacles to making the above changes in your district. A thematic analysis was used to examine the responses to the three questions. This analysis identified themes and trends in responses from the various schools that can be seen in the appendix.

When asked about recent reform, responding participants shared that district-wide reform from a top-down chain of command (meaning that the ideas for and decisions regarding change originated in administration offices) was most prevalent. This method of reform was associated with *canned curriculum,* meaning it involved the adoption and implementation of a packaged type of reform that has been published and marketed. Limited *grass-roots* reform, reform that is specific to the circumstances and needs of the school and evolved from within the school or district, was evident. When asked about the type of reform wanted in schools and districts, the trend for more teacher-training and common planning time was noted most often. There was also evidence from analyzing trends in the responses to support the idea that many special education teachers and coordinators were pushing for the inclusion of special education students, while administrators and regular education teachers were pushing for more alternative school settings, especially for students with behavior disorders. Principals, regular education teachers, and special education teachers, however, all saw a need for school-wide

discipline plans. When asked about the obstacles to reform, a number of the participants addressed issues of teacher and administrator attitudes, adequate funding, and sufficient planning time.

The principal, regular education teacher, and special education teacher surveys that were clustered within the same profile were pulled for further thematic analysis. This method of selecting surveys was used for reliability purposes and accuracy in identifying schools from the 3 profiles. Thirty-four surveys were included in this extended analysis that broke down the responses according to their identified profiles and educator groups (principals, regular education teachers, and special education teachers).

The extended analysis showed that the three profiles and the three educator groups identified meeting state and federal mandates as their most recent reform efforts. This can be attributed to the mandates made by the 1998 South Carolina Education Accountability Act. Thus, it appears that legislated reform may occur without relation to the profiles or the job of the educator. The amount of reform outside of legislation, however, including curriculum and instruction, teacher development and training, and scheduling vary among the profiles. Naturally, those identified as "high" listed the largest amount of recent reform. All three educator groups within the high profile also identified the areas listed above. An anomaly lied, however, among the special education teachers. They were the only group to mention the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97), the importance of being in compliance with federal law, and inclusionary practices. While this appears to be a special education topic, and possibly refuting that an anomaly exists, the new guidelines established in IDEA 97 require greater collaboration between all educators (ex. general education teacher must be present at IEP meetings).

When asked about the types of reform most wanted, issues surrounding curriculum and instruction, staffing, student performance, and school facilities (listed in descending order of frequency) can be seen across profiles and educator groups. Interestingly, all three educator groups from the low profiles, as well as, the medium profile principals identified discipline as a major problem. The low profile schools specifically advocated the removal of students with behavior problems from public schools and encouraged placement in alternative settings. At the same time, high and medium profile special educators identified the need for inclusion and integration of special education students into the regular classroom. Regarding the topic of hiring teachers, principals and special educators wanted more teachers to help service all students and decrease class size, while regular education teachers noted the need for a means of releasing teachers who refused to accept change and reform ideas.

Finally, on the topic of obstacles to reform, all educator groups recognized funding and support across the board. In comparison between the profiles, middle and high profile groups appeared to see money and time as their only obstacles. Low profile schools, however, saw teacher attitudes as an additional obstacle. This implies that an attitude either for or against change has an impact on its success. Finally, special educators identified the obstacles of student responsibility and paperwork. In addition to the extensive amounts of paperwork and caseloads, special education teachers appeared to be asking for a shared responsibility with regular education teachers in servicing students who receive special education services. For example, if a special educator must

attend a meeting, the student(s) who receive services at that time should be able to function within the mainstream setting while the special education teacher is unavailable. Such need for help and sharing of responsibilities connect, in some part, to the discussion of IDEA '97's push for collaboration above.

Conclusion

The focus group meeting and interviews in Study 1A led to a list of possible discriminating characteristics of reform. From this list, a formal survey was created and analyzed by the method of cluster analysis in Study 1B. These clusters identified different reform profiles based on the analysis of similar questions among the surveys. Additionally, a thematic analysis of the narrative responses from the surveys was completed. This analysis provided both a descriptive and more complete picture of reform practices, wants and obstacles within the reform profiles. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodology and analysis into our study we have created a more complete and descriptive picture and understanding of reform profiles that exist among South Carolina's public schools.

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Appendix

- RCGI
- Themes
- Cluster Analysis Table
- SIRS (Principal only)
- Initial Theme Analysis
- Extended Theme Analysis

Reform Characteristics Guided Interview (RCGI)

Discussion of School Reform:

1. What are your general perceptions about school reform (in SC)?
2. From your experience, what are the effects of reform?
3. What are the stages of reform as you see them? Including what goes on in between beginning and end. When does theory meet practice, and what does it look like?
4. Who are the principal characters (personnel) involved with reform initiatives?

Characteristics of Reform-Minded Schools/districts

1. Describe what reform-oriented school/districts are like?
2. Can you give any specific examples of such schools or districts?
3. What are the differences between reform-oriented schools and non-reform-oriented schools?
4. What do you perceive to be the catalysts (causes) for reform or change?

Define Variables (measurable outcomes) and explain how focus group brainstormed a list that will show later.

1. What are some discriminating variables between reform-minded and non-reform-minded schools?
2. What are the measures of effectiveness in a reform-minded school? What could one see to know that reform is working effectively within the school/district?
3. What outcome measurements could be taken that would provide evidence of successful school reform? (ie. attendance records, test scores)

Focus Group & Interview Themes

School Leadership/Culture
*Goal setting
*Grant writers and reviewers
*Principal
*Recognizing need for change
*School choice
*Staff involvement
*Trailblazers and risk-takers

Teaching Practices
*Class size and physical appearance
*Communication
Curriculum
*Environment
*Facilities/physical plant
*Levels of inclusiveness
*Location of special education class w/in a school
*Support - teachers feeling part of "we"
*Teacher flexibility and age
*Techniques (teaching strategies)
*Technology
*Tools - books

Teacher Education
Higher education
*Licensure - teaching in area
Professional development
Teacher leadership - grass roots developments
*Use of staff development w/in district/school

Legislation
Goals 2000
IDEA '97
*Local school district interpretations of legislation
State Department of Education (accred. dept.)

Families and Schools
Family organizations
*Parental involvement in education
*Parental willingness to help and # of volunteers
*Parents and Community expectations
PTO

Student Involvement and Ownership
* Age
*Motivation
*Types of courses
*Types of diplomas/certification

Attendance and dropout rates
*Attitudes
*Awareness of expectations
*Staff turnover rates

Safety
*At-risk Students - # of referrals & types
*Discipline - # and types of referrals
Management
School Safety
School violence
*Support services

Student Outcomes
*Accountability (EAA)
Evaluation methods
Standards

Special Education Students
*Academic assistance plans
*Drop-outs
Medical issues
Special education population
*Staff retention
*Student goal trends after high school?
*Test scores

Public Relations
*Funding
*Public image and reputation

**Variables noted by research assistants as a result of literature reviews prior to and validated by the focus group and interviews.*

Table 1

Principal Survey	High	Low
Reform activity (1 = low; 3 = high)	2.4	1.9
Number of replacement teachers hired	2.6	7.0
Teacher willingness to change (1 – 3)	2.1	1.7
Rating of school resources (1 – 4)	3.2	2.7
Parents actively involved	33%	25%

Special Education Teacher Survey	High	Medium	Low
Reform activity (1 = low; 3 = high)	2.6	2.2	1.7
Resources devoted to special education (1 – 4)	3.1	2.7	2.1
Special education students in general classes	85%	55%	57%
Cooperative work of regular and special education teachers (1 – 4)	3.5	2.7	2.8
Principal support for school reform (1 – 3)	3.0	3.0	2.0
IEP meetings with parent present	88%	48%	60%

Regular Education Teacher Survey	High	Medium	Low
Reform activity (1 = low; 3 = high)	2.6	2.2	1.8
Rating of school resources (1 – 4)	3.5	2.8	2.5
Special education services (1 – 4)	3.6	2.8	2.3
Principal support for school reform (1 – 3)	3.0	3.0	1.9
Parents actively involved in school	44%	16%	20%

Principal Survey School ID:

This survey will help the Project ANSER researchers compile information about educational reform in South Carolina Schools. Some questions require you to check only one answer, and other questions request a short response. If you have additional comments, include them on the back of this survey. Please complete to the best of your knowledge and return as soon as possible. All information will be kept confidential and used only by the researchers.

1. How long have you been a principal? _____

2. How long have you been at this school? _____

3. What is the approximate average years of teaching experience of your faculty? _____

4. How would you rate the day-to-day attendance of your faculty?

   ___ poor ___ fair ___ good ___ excellent

5. How do most of your teachers stay current with educational research and initiatives?

6. How many teachers did you hire this school year to replace teachers who left? _____

7. How do you attract or recruit new teachers to your school?

8. How many staff meetings have you had so far this school year? _____

9. What were the major topics discussed in these meetings?

10. How flexible are your teachers when changes need to be made in your school?

    ___ resistant to change ___ willing to change ___ eager to change

11. How would you rate your school resources?

    ___ inadequate ___ barely adequate ___ adequate ___ more than adequate

12. How do you feel the resources your school receives compare to other South Carolina schools?

    ___ below average ___ average ___ above average

13. How many grants did your school receive last school year? _____

14. Who typically writes the grants for which your school applies? _____

15. What is the general physical condition of your school?

___ poor ___ fair ___ good ___ excellent

16. Who do you view as the leader of reform for your school?

___ teachers ___ school administration ___ district administration

17. How do you perceive the support from the district for reform efforts in your school?

___ not supportive ___ somewhat supportive ___supportive

18. How would you characterize recent reform in your school compared to the average South Carolina school?

___ fewer changes than most schools ___ about the same changes ___ more changes

19. How likely are you to institute change in your school?

___ no change is needed ___ will change when necessary ___ I promote change

20. How many meetings have you attended this school year to work with other principals on developing strategies for reform? _____

21. What was the dropout rate (% of students) last school year? _____

22. What percent of your students receive a diploma? _____ Certificate of attendance? _____

23. Approximately how many discipline referrals do you have in one month? _____

24. What programs does your school use to provide extra academic assistance?

25. How many volunteers do you have on average in your school each week? _____

26. How would you rate community support for your school?

___ poor ___ fair ___ good ___ excellent

27. Approximately what percent of parents are actively involved in your school? _____

28. Approximately what percent of parents would support reform efforts in your school? _____

29. Does your school provide any parent education courses? ___ no ___ yes

Please answer the following open-ended questions in sufficient detail. You may write on the back of this page or add additional pages as needed.

Describe recent reform efforts, if any, in your school.

Describe changes you would most like to make in your school, if you could.

Describe the biggest obstacles to making the above changes in your school.

We will be visiting schools that have had significant reform. Please help us identify any schools that you know of that have made major changes by listing them below. (You may include your own school.)

Study 1B Narrative Questions General Themes

	Superintendents	Coordinators	Principals	Special Education Teacher	Regular Education Teacher
Recent Reform:	*Develop programs outside of school (pre, alternative, and after-school prog.) *Reorganize scheduling *Aligning district standards to SC standards *Implementing packaged instructional reform (Cunningham's 4 Block Model)	*Transition to work programs for H.S. *Working on IDEA requirements	*Technology *School-wide discipline *Become K-5 building *Staff development *Decrease class size *Scheduling *Non-graded report cards *Team teaching and planning *All day kindergarten *Assistant principal *Sit-based management and teacher empowerment *Became magnet school *Became arts infused school *Extended blocks of instruction *21st Century Grant School	*Regular ed teacher at IEP meetings *Improve writing program *Student Assistant Programs *Communication between grade level and resource teachers	*Dept. and grade level planning *Decrease class size *Scheduling *Non-graded report cards *All day kindergarten *Teaching assistants *Home-visit conferencing *Inquiry-based learning *Added sped. classes *Parent involvement *Heterogeneous grouping *Foreign language *Multi-grade classroom *Clean building *Year round calendar *Alternative school
Reform Wanted:	*Develop programs outside of school (pre, alternative, and after-school prog.) *Change teaching styles to "best practice" *Teacher training and staff development	*See more students served in reg. Ed setting with sped. Support *Transition to work programs *Academic instruction programs *Teacher training for all about sped. Students *Improve instructional strategies for all teachers	*Decrease class size *Technology *Year round calendar *Social worker/nurse/counselor *Staff development and planning *Teaching assistants *School facilities and space *Scheduling *Individualized instruction *Assistance programs *Alternative schools for EBD *Increase discipline *Heterogeneous grouping *Parent involvement *Full day kindergarten *Site-based management *Reassigning good teachers to younger grades *Eliminating k-2 testing	*All teachers responsible for teaching all students *Inclusion *School transition to job training *Improved relations between teachers *Sped. Curriculum *Teaching materials *Uniforms *Eliminate standardized testing	*Extended school day *Go to K-5 school *Alternative schools for EBD *Increase discipline *Heterogeneous grouping *Curriculum coordinator *Student motivation *Reading Recovery *Remediation materials *Science lab *Quick testing for sped. Qualify

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Obstacles:

*Networking
*Create more community in school environment
*Developmentally appropriate teaching

*Multi-grade level class
*Non-graded report cards
*Allow teachers to personalize teaching styles instead of following programs script.

*Funding
*Teacher attitude (traditional teachers)

*General educator attitude

*Teacher attitude

*Teacher attitude (old teachers)

*Teacher attitude

*Teacher shortage
*Transportation
*Time/support
*State testing
*Space and resources
*Community traditions

*Failure to consult research
*Too many demands/changes
*State regulations
*Lack of accommodations
*Administrative priorities

*Transportation
*Too many demands/changes
*State regulations
*Lack of teaching incentive

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Study 1B Narrative Responses to "Most Recent Reform"

Principals

High

- Video portfolios, student/teacher portfolios, non-graded report card, thematic units, and teacher empowerment
- Pee Dee & Horry county had grade level curr. Standards prior to the state. We develop an individual personalized education plan for all students involving 100% participation of parents. We have implemented the Horry county literacy program (based on Cunningham's model and a numerically program k-2 to be expanded each year. We have diagnostic testing for all students in LA reading and math.
- We changed from a traditional six period 50 minute per class to an extended period block of instruction with four major blocks of 90 minutes each.
- Career majors, raised academic standards, gold seal achievement program, career specialist, teacher advisement program, career academies, flexible scheduling, Individualized Academic program, SREB site, new American HS site, entreprenurship program, school to work, alumni education forum, SAT program
- There have been no major reform efforts in our school in my first eight months, other ten those related to the EAA of 1998.

Regular Education

High

- Career development to implement E.AACT, & PACT, & ADEPT
- Our school is a magnet for arts integration, the class size has been lowered to 23 max. The average is lower. We moved to a non-graded reporting system for evaluation of student progress. Checklists anecdotal records & portfolios are kept for documentation. We added keys to excellence for your school by NEA. This process will assist in assessing our school's instructional health and will engage the schools faculty, administration etc. in identifying changes that need to occur & ways to implement those changes.
- We are in the process of implementing the Cunningham – 4 block LA program in our school. To prepare for this, our principal has had teachers observing other schools for two years. The Cunningham course is offered free to all teachers. We are supplied with texts and materials.
- Have implemented the Horry county literacy model in Grades k-5 Have begun numeracy model in k-2 will implement further in the next year 1999-2000 grade 3, 2000-2001 grade 4. Writing standards focused on heavily over the past 3 years. Increased diagnostic testing is being used by teachers. Parent-teacher conferences are held regularly.
- Set Curriculum to meet PACT objectives. Language and math have had a lot more extra responsibilities-more meetings and stricter curriculums

Special Education

High

- KEYS program
- More English and Mathematics the entire year instead of one semester. After school programs, Exit/SAT math, exit reading/ writing or going to homework center. Teachers have been attending professional workshops to improve instructional strategies in order to become more effective.
- Technology every classroom now has 2 computers w/full internet accesses
- Curriculum changes to meet SC standards
- Implementation of the 4-block literacy program; k-2 has been saturated extensive he3-5 The numeracy Model is into its first full year of mandatory implementation. The Numeracy model is into it's first full year of implementation in K-2 it will be gradually implemented for the next 3 years to include up to grade 5. The 4 block literacy model has been integrated with the ITI Model and emphasizes he life skills.

Middle

- Revising district curriculum, academic planning, Cunningham literacy model, PACT prep
- Moving all teachers toward addressing student academic needs specifically in language arts through Cunningham four block.
- This year we implemented the 21st century after school programs which meets 5 days each week. The program provides additional instruction to students who scored below the 25% on standardized test. 2) Locus learning literacy program was implemented schedule. 3. Cunningham four-block model was implemented in grades 7&8, 4) our school is the states 1st school of promise, 5) our school implemented SAT prep course and SAT coach this year.
- We are a Carnegie school and have implemented the turning points principals. Strong related arts program

Middle

- Pat Cunningham 4 blocks
- We are implementing state standards, working on improving test scores, and are heavily involved in learning focused teaching.
- PACT test, accountability, writing and reading, parental involvement

Middle

- State standards
- IDEA, staying compliance of the law, faculty has attended teaching strategies workshops
- New IEP forms, new BIP/FIBA forms, providing work for students in AES, reevaluations-3yrs

Low

- Teacher evaluation-new state system, assistant principal used only as instrument to improve instruction, technology in classroom
- Dress code for students
- Began using the Cunningham 4-block method; changed from departmental to self-contained classrooms. Reduced class size, Increased the use of technology with internet connections in all rooms, online research, etc. Our teachers built their own computers in a Saturday workshop in Sept. This has had a great impact on our school. Implemented, second steps, a social skills program.

Low

- The latest reform efforts are: Long-range and short planning for instruction, weekly departmental meetings to coordinate instruction and make curriculum decisions.
- Most of reform efforts have been in the use and integration of technology. Over the last year we have placed a computer in every classroom and are providing most of our math students with graphing calculators. Teachers still need training in order to effectively use these "hands-on", technological items to enhance learning.

Low

- Inclusion model in an American Government class, Provision of assistants in two math classes, Development of a district employability diploma for special ed. students
- Many of our reforms have to do with curriculum, although some of those are questionable. Discipline problems, staff development, and alternative classroom
- Some classes have started using Reading Logs as a component of the reading program.

Study 1B Narrative Response to "Reform Wanted"

Principal

High

- Improve facility, flexible scheduling for in-services & parent conferences, year around calendar, more arts programs (dance-full time), faculty visits to other programs-exchange programs, science lab, looping
- Better implementation of curriculum models.
- More money for technology, more, parent/community involvement, reduced teacher/pupil ratio
- More faculty/ staff interaction

Regular Education

High

- An additional assistant principal
- Students to take a more active role in their education. find ways to show children the importance of education. More parental involvement and teachers teach more across the curriculums.
- Increase structured recess for children only 15 minutes is allotted per day which really guide instruction means 7-10 min. Children need more free time. Too many standards.
- Add a reading recovery for struggling readers in the early grades. Resource pullout in not enough & not all children qualify for resource anyway.
- Class size and time I have one small target class of twenty students. We get a lot done and I feel that I really know these students. I feel that they have made significant growth this year. If my other two classes were this size, I would feel great about this year and student achievement. Also we have been shorted 100 minutes per week for LA. We need the time back.

Special Education

High

- Increase the number of resource specialists to promote LRE for some self-contained students. Increase parent/community interaction to promote cohesiveness between students, faculty, and community
- Building changes, more classrooms, and more materials, need help with integration.
- I would want all students who were identified and placed in alternative settings previously to be sent back to an alternative school
- I would like to do some integration into the regular classroom with the special teacher going to the students at least 1 period per week at 10-15 minute intervals, I would also like for the resource students to stay with their teachers when and if the resource teacher is absent. They should be able to fit right into whatever is planned for that day in their classroom with better or no modifications so the student can see and get used to the regular and modified curriculum.

Middle

- Increase offerings in exploratory classes
- Atruly community school in coordination with area agencies-health, social, family services-a one stop shop for families, a school for the arts and sciences
- Be able to address the needs of individual students more fully & specifically. Keep discipline problems & severe special ed. problems from taking time away from the teachers and other students.
- I would like to add a CCC computer lab so that teachers may bring classes in for computer-assisted instructor.
- More parental involvement, higher test scores

Middle

- No remarks
- Smaller classes, more materials, new building, more computers

Middle

- More DAP
- I would love to see a new school built even more important is trying to motivate our students. The majority will not study.
- Full time assistant in all special education classes
- Smaller classes
- Exposing students to the outside, more hands-on experience, and a class to teach social skills, and how to cope with everyday life. We as teachers are over-whelmed with paperwork and duties. Removal from class three to four times a week for meetings.

Low

- The methods of instruction used by most teachers, we want them to do more hands-on stuff with the students
- Change from k-8 to k-5 format
- Continue to reduce class size, implement a writing program across the curriculum. Get parents involved (add a mental health counselor on site) remove students with behavior problems and place them in a program of reform that would bring them back to us with changed attitudes and work habits. I would like to have no teachers I portables! I would increase the number of days we attend school-possibly go yr. round.

Low

- Meaningful in service that really impacts instruction with follow-up
- Put students in alternative schools when they constantly disrupt learning. Have a means of releasing teachers who refuse to accept change and reform ideas.

Low

- Improved relationships between regular and special education teachers, improve special education in general, in service, and lower case loads
- Would like to see children no be promoted in the district if they perform significantly below the grade placement and/or their age level peers
- The federal and state legislatures just need to acknowledge and legislate that some children just don't belong in public schools. They aren't being educated and they keep many others from being educated.

Study 1B Narrative Responses to "Obstacles to Reform"

Principals

High

- Money, time and support
- Time-different individuals move at different rates-patience.
- Money
- No obstacles, except for time
- Time and paperwork

Middle

- Funding and personnel
- Funds and lack of district support of different schools
- Training, funding, time, district, state and federal guidelines and policies
- Purchasing the CCC program is very expensive
- Lack of community support due to the fact that there is a private school here. Most parents work outside the community. Our community is made up of small areas that are geographically widespread. This tends to encourage separation and discourage community spirit.

Low

- Money, building
- Teacher attitudes toward change. Not enough money to continue after grant money runs out
- Money, support from "high powers", transportation time

Regular Education Teachers

High

- Budget
- People making change
- Teachers are not valued in our society neither is education. Parental involvement and state and federal government
- $$$
- Scheduling, school size, teacher allotment. We have a large middle school and the schedule flows smoothly only if math and language arts blocks are the same amount of time. We do not have enough teachers for small classes at all times.

Middle

- No remarks
- Money and changes

Low

- Apathy of faculty, staff and students, resistance of faculty, staff and students
- Teachers, who will only teach in a lecture style and who are not willing to try new methods of instruction, testing, etc. are the biggest obstacle.

Special Education Teachers

High

- Money
- Financial barriers
- School board members, extended school time
- Teachers want certain students out of the classroom and to not be responsible for the resource students to stay with their teachers when and if the resource students to stay with their teachers when and if the resource teacher is absent. Teachers want certain students out of the classroom and not to be responsible for students' learning for that time period. It is too much of a separate entity as it is and students do not need to feel so detached from the remainder of the group.

Middle

- Funding
- No comment
- Having to give letter grades
- Getting parents involved and getting students excited about learning
- Hire aides to perform lunch duty. Reduce paperwork. Eliminate a lot of meetings with parents throughout the year. They have jobs and other responsibilities

Low

- Concerned about what is fair than what is right
- The district policy has lent toward promotion. If a parent disagrees with retention for any reason, they may go to district office to appeal the decision. I don't know of any cases in which the retention was upheld if a parent went downtown.
- Pre-conceived attitudes of some, case load limits